

Paragraph	Replacement Paragraph in Clean Form
<p>Paragraph [0031]</p>	<p>One aspect of the invention of special interest is that the pieces making up the sectors 21, 23 are identical in shape and size, and that the mating surfaces are two identical pairs of complimentary mating surfaces. The sectors 21, 23 are separably joined along the complimentary mating surfaces. Furthermore, the structure for preventing or blocking relative radial and axial movement between the sectors is provided by the complimentary mating surfaces. In this manner, ribs 32a and 32b act as a set of lines parallel to the annular hole. The complimentary mating surfaces have a portion defined by a set of lines parallel to the axis of the annular hole and a portion perpendicular to the axis. The portion of the mating surfaces defined by lines parallel to the axis prevents relative movement of the sectors in a plurality of radial directions, and the portion of the mating surfaces that is perpendicular to the axis prevents relative movement of the sectors in a plurality of axial directions when the sectors are assembled together.</p>

In the Claims:

Please substitute the following claims for the pending claims of the same number:

- 1 1. (Amended) A coupler for joining a first conduit having a first
- 2 diameter and a second conduit, the first conduit having an axis and a first
- 3 outwardly extending flange having a second diameter axially spaced from a

4 second outwardly extending flange having a third diameter, the coupler
5 comprising:
6 a housing including an annular hole having an outer diameter and an inner
7 diameter;
8 the outer diameter of the annular hole being greater than the second
9 diameter of the first outwardly extending flange;
10 the inner diameter of the annular hole being greater than the first diameter
11 of the first conduit, to permit axial movement of the coupler over the first conduit;
12 the inner diameter of the annular hole being less than the second diameter
13 of the first outwardly extending flange and less than the third diameter of the
14 second outwardly extending flange to prohibit movement of portions of the
15 housing defining the annular hole axially along the first conduit over either of the
16 first outwardly extending flange and the second outwardly extending flange;
17 the housing and the annular hole being formed with at least two sectors
18 radially compressible into a snap fit relationship with portions of the sectors
19 defining the annular hole disposed between the first outwardly extending flange
20 and the second outwardly extending flange; whereby
21 the coupler is moveable over the first outwardly extending flange to
22 engage the second conduit, with the portions of the sectors defining the annular
23 hole disposed between the first outwardly extending flange and the second
24 outwardly extending flange.

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(cont)

1 2. (Amended) A coupler in the form of a housing having opposite end
2 faces, the coupler for joining two conduits together, wherein the coupler
3 comprises:

4 an annular hole extending along an axis between said opposite end faces
5 of the housing, the annular hole comprising a first inner diameter, lugs having a
6 second inner diameter, and a flange having a third inner diameter, wherein the
7 first diameter is greater than the second diameter, and the second diameter is
8 greater than the third diameter;

9 the housing comprising a plurality of sectors that snap together;

10 wherein the plurality of sectors each have a rib;

11 and wherein each said rib lockingly engages a respective channel to
12 prevent relative movement of the sectors in a plurality of radial directions.

1 6. (Amended) A coupler in the form of a nut having an annular hole
2 extending between end faces and centered on an axis, the coupler being
3 adapted for coupling two conduits together by a bayonet twist and lock action,
4 comprising:

5 two sectors of the nut defining the annular hole and for surrounding ends
6 of the two conduits by respective axial ends adjacent end faces of the nut;

7 the sectors being sufficiently resilient to snap lock together;

8 wherein the sectors snap lock together by relative radially inward
9 movement; and

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(continued)

10 further comprising at least one axially elongated rib forming a radially
11 outwardly facing groove and a another axially elongated rib forming a radially
12 inwardly facing groove on each of the two sectors, wherein the ribs resiliently
13 slide over each other into a seated position during a snap locking action of the
14 two sectors.

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1 10. (Amended) A coupler in the form of a nut, the nut having two end
2 faces and an annular hole extending between the two end faces along an axis,
3 the coupler comprising:
4 the nut having two separable sectors joined along mating surfaces, the
5 mating surfaces comprising a portion defined by a set of lines parallel to the axis
6 of the annular hole and a portion perpendicular to said axis; and
7 wherein the portion of said mating surfaces defined by lines parallel to the
8 axis prevents relative movement of the sectors in a plurality of radial directions
9 and the portion of said mating surfaces that is perpendicular to said axis prevent
10 relative movement of the sectors in a plurality of axial directions when said
11 sectors are assembled together, said mating surfaces that is perpendicular to
12 said axis comprising a stopping flange.

1 14. (Amended) A coupler and conduits combination, comprising:
2 (a) a first conduit having an outwardly extending flange on an end of the
3 first conduit,
4 (b) a second conduit having a fastener extending radially outward on an
5 end of the second conduit,
6 (c) a coupler forming an annular hole, said coupler having portions
7 defining said annular hole, said portions having an inwardly extending flange that
8 receives and holds the outwardly extending flange on the end of the first conduit
9 and complementary fastener that couples to the fastener on the end of the
10 second conduit for a coupled configuration;
11 wherein the coupler comprises two sectors connected in fixed relation by
12 relative radial movement in a snap lock action; and
13 wherein each of the two sectors has a stopping flange that prevents
14 relative axial movement of the sectors.

1 16. (Amended) The combination of claim 14, wherein the two sectors
2 snap lock together with said portions defining the annular hole surrounding the
3 first conduit and retained thereon by interference of said outwardly and inwardly
4 extending flanges.

1 19. (Amended) A method of using a coupler in the form of a nut having
2 a first sector and a second sector defining an annular hole extending between
3 end faces of the nut, the coupler being adapted for coupling a first and a second
4 conduit together, the method comprising the steps of:

5 (a) separating said first and the second sectors of the coupler sufficiently
6 to receive the first conduit,

7 (b) surrounding an outwardly extending flange of the first conduit by
8 portions of the sectors defining said annular hole,

9 (c) flexibly hinging the sectors radially inwardly to a snap lock

10 configuration, wherein the first and second sectors of the coupler form said nut

as
(conduit)

11 and surround the first conduit, and

12 (d) moving the coupler axially and rotationally with respect to the second

13 conduit thereby coupling the second conduit to the first conduit.